

White Album 2 Drama CD

「祭りの前～ふたりの24時間～」

Matsuri no mae ~ Futari no niyuujikan ~

Before the festival ~ The two's 24 hours ~

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Drama CD download: <http://www.mediafire.com/download/ov93w9i18115tgz/>

Subtitled version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KI6lsA29V8E>

Translator: AnoHanaNoNamae

Notes:

While I'm not sure when best to read this, I recommend it to be read only after finishing IC at least once, preferably twice.

I'd even say it might be better to finish Chiaki's true end in CC beforehand, but that's up to you.

This details the 24 hours before the campus live festival in IC, and immediately follows the scene where Haruki takes Setsuna away from her class's cafe and heads towards Kazusa's place to practice.

Calling someone by their first or last name, with or without honorifics, has special nuances in Japanese so I kept that in.

I have no clue how to properly incorporate pauses or a "trailing off" sound when writing dialogue, so excuse the numerous ellipses.

01. Prologue

(Airport announcement in the background)

Kazusa: It's time.

Haruki: Don't go!

Kazusa: Don't make me say it again. This is... our farewell.

Haruki: Touma... Touma!!

Kazusa: Go be with Setsuna... with... Setsuna...

Haruki: It's too late. I betrayed both of you. I couldn't bring happiness to either of you!

Kazusa: I'm sorry. It's all my fault.

Haruki: You're wrong! It's mine. Everything was because of me!

Kazusa: But there's one thing you're mistaken about. I did feel... just a bit of happiness.

Haruki: Ah... Kazusa!

Kazusa: Goodbye. Goodbye for real this time, Haruki. You can't just keep crying like that forever, okay?

Haruki: Kazusa!!

Kazusa: Ah... Setsuna...

Setsuna: Kazusa...

Kazusa: I'm sorry.

Setsuna: Kazusa... Kazusa!

Kazusa: I'm sorry, Setsuna. I couldn't become your best friend. I couldn't be who you wanted me to be. Even though I promised to... I'm sorry.

02. A new song. The third song. The last song.

Setsuna: What's this?

Haruki: Ah, well, you see...

Kazusa: A new song. The third song. The last song.

Setsuna: Huh?

Kazusa: But since I fell sick, we've only got 24 hours to left to practice.

Haruki: It's not just your fault, Touma. I'm the one who couldn't finish the guitar solo in 『SOUND OF DESTINY』 until this morning.

Setsuna: H-huh?

Kazusa: The synthesizer bit is finished, and the guitar part's not too bad. Not to mention I arranged it according to Ogiso's pitch.

Setsuna: According to my pitch... So this is an original?

Haruki: Well, more or less.

Setsuna: W-wait a minute! I still don't quite follow...

Haruki: Touma wrote it, this third song. At first I thought it was impossible seeing how little time we had left, so I almost gave up, but...

Kazusa: I didn't really care whether or not we did it, but Kitahara said he wanted to get it done no matter what.

Haruki: Didn't really care, huh?

Kazusa: Got a problem?

Setsuna: ...

Haruki: Well, that's the story, Setsuna... eh?

Setsuna: ...

Haruki: What's wrong? Something on your mind?

Setsuna: Was... I the only one left out again...?

Haruki: Ah...

Kazusa: That's right. We kept it a secret from you.

Setsuna: !?

Haruki: Touma!?

Kazusa: Kitahara wanted to surprise you, so he made me keep my mouth shut.

Setsuna: Huh...?

Kazusa: Those lyrics were apparently written with you in mind, Ogiso.

Setsuna: H-huh?

Haruki: Ah, don't say that! Ah, you see, the lyrics were available a long time ago.

Setsuna: H-h-huh?

Haruki: But, once we knew Setsuna would be on the vocals, I made some edits here and there to better match your image.

Setsuna: Ah... Um... So you're saying...?

Kazusa: Lyrics by Kitahara and arranged by me, a song written just for you, Ogiso.

Setsuna: !!

Haruki: Touma just said something really embarrassing...

Kazusa: It's your fault you couldn't get to the point even though you wanted to explain it.

Haruki: ...Sorry.

Haruki: My initial goal for joining the Light Music Association was to try writing a

song.

Setsuna: ...

Haruki: There were already two people playing the guitar, so I didn't think I'd get a chance to perform at the school festival. But, either as a grand project or just a stupid idea, I wanted to leave something behind. After all, my past has been rather lacklustre. I'd say I'm pretty good at writing... Although I mostly only write stuff like essays, proofs, chemical equations, translations and whatnot. Anyway, take a look and tell me what needs fixing. Touma over there didn't change a single thing so I'm a little worried.

Kazusa: That's because I didn't even know where to start.

Setsuna: Hmm.

Haruki: So, what do you think? Might be too tough for us to finish in a single day after all, huh.

Setsuna: ...

Haruki: Setsuna?

Setsuna: Sorry, could you be quiet for a bit?

Haruki: Huh?

Setsuna: I've started mentally practising already. Touma-san, could you play it for me once? I don't know how to read music sheets.

Kazusa: Sure.

Haruki: Se-Setsuna?

Setsuna: There's no time, Haruki-kun. We only have a single day left! ... Let's do our best and finish our song!

Kazusa & Setsuna (Narration): Before the festival, the two's 24 hours.

03. Provocations falling on deaf ears

(Setsuna rehearses)

Kazusa: Okay, let's take a break.

Setsuna: Huh, already? I'm not tired at all, you know?

Haruki: There's no way that's true. It's already dinnertime.

Setsuna: Ah... It's this late already? Staying down here really makes you lose your sense of time.

Haruki: That's because there's nowhere for sunlight to get in. The festival could have finished and we might not even know.

Kazusa: Instead of complaining about the layout of my house, rest. Let's get dinner over with so you can perfect your individual parts before the date changes.

Setsuna: Got it! Then I'll just go ahead and prepare a stunning feast for...

Kazusa & Haruki: No thanks.

Setsuna: What? But, Touma-san just recovered recently so we need to prepare something nutritious! Ordering a pizza or something is definitely out of the question.

Kazusa: I don't really need to eat anything anyway.

Setsuna: No way. Even if you don't have any appetite you should still eat something. You still need to go for at least 20 more hours, you know?

Kazusa: Ah, how annoying. I'll leave it to you guys.

Haruki: I'm pretty sure that "goodies" place does deliveries. They have a pretty extensive menu, so there should be something that fits what we need.

Setsuna: Oh yeah. Something like a light risotto might be just the thing!

Haruki: It's decided then. I'll go give them a call. You girls are fine with me ordering, right?

Kazusa: Nothing spicier than ketchup, and nothing more bitter than carrots. Actually, just don't get vegetables. For dessert, get an order of their pudding. An order being three of them, of course.

Haruki: I'll just pretend I didn't hear the last half.

Setsuna: She said she'd "leave it to us" just 10 seconds ago, didn't she?

Kazusa: At any rate, if there's no pudding then I don't need dinner. To think you'd be complaining about the perfect food for the sickly, it's like you guys don't care about my health at all.

Haruki: Okay okay okay! I'll be upstairs ordering. You just wait here quietly.

Kazusa: Seriously, could he be any more annoying?

Setsuna: Good work during the rehearsal, Touma-san!

Kazusa: You too. By the way, are those clothes uncomfortable at all? They're my casual clothes.

Setsuna: No, not at all. It feels great against my skin too. This fabric is some good stuff!

Kazusa: That's good to hear. Couldn't have you rehearsing in that hakama*, after all. *en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakama

Setsuna: It's just that the top feels a little long, and a little loose around the chest...

Kazusa: Sorry about that. Compared to Ogiso, my body's rather uneven.

Setsuna: Uneven? I'd say "curvy" is the better word. It's like you're from some other country!

Kazusa: They mean about the same, don't they?

Setsuna: As someone built almost stereotypically like a Japanese person, all I can say is I'm so jealous! Seriously, how did you get such an amazing figure?

Kazusa: M-more importantly, why don't you go lie down and take a break or something?

Setsuna: Touma-san too, you just recovered recently after all.

Kazusa: Thanks to that episode I've slept more than enough. But Ogiso, I heard you couldn't sleep last night?

Setsuna: U-um, putting why you know about what condition I was in last night aside... I'm fine right now. In fact, I feel really energetic!

Kazusa: Putting you being the one who said we should be honest with one another aside, you'd better not collapse once it's time for the real deal.

Setsuna: I'll be fine. The me right now has nothing to fear!

Kazusa: Oh? Big words for someone who was shaking on stage yesterday.

Setsuna: Haruki-kun and his big mouth... Yeah, I was scared back then. I couldn't stop myself from shaking.

Kazusa: See? Just one day ago you were in such a poor condition.

Setsuna: Well, I was all alone, you know? Neither of you were by my side.

Kazusa: Ah...

Setsuna: It was painful, lonely, and sad. I even thought to myself, "why am I even standing here?"

Kazusa: T-the club president was with you, wasn't he?

Setsuna: Iizuka-kun did his best trying to cheer me up. I was happy about that, but it wasn't enough. I couldn't calm myself down.

Kazusa: Ah...

Setsuna: It's rude to him for me to say that, but it's the truth, so it can't be helped. As selfish as that might be.

Kazusa: I... I'm sorry. It's all because I collapsed.
Setsuna: No, it's not your fault. You must have worked yourself to death writing this song.
Kazusa: Ogiso...
Setsuna: You did your best for the three of us, after all.
Kazusa: Eh? Ah, yeah...
Setsuna: It was for the three of us, right?
Kazusa: Y-you're embarrassing me here. I just thought that two songs wouldn't be exciting enough, that's all.
Setsuna: Hmm...
Kazusa: What? Why are you staring at me like that...
Setsuna: That's not what I really wanted to make sure...
Kazusa: Eh? Did you say something?
Setsuna: Hmm.
Kazusa: Like I said, what's up with the staring?
Setsuna: Anyway, I'm all fine now. I won't have any problems like I did yesterday.
Kazusa: Ah, all right.
Setsuna: That's because Haruki-kun came to get me.
Kazusa: You two sure have guts, parading around town in that get-up.
Setsuna: I know, right? It's like we were eloping!
Kazusa: If we were still in the Taishou era it'd certainly look like that.
Setsuna: We were holding hands the whole way here, you know?
Kazusa: He should have just called a taxi. It's like his brain just shuts down when it comes to stuff like this.
Setsuna: Hmm.
Kazusa: What, something on my face?
Setsuna: That didn't seem to shake you at all.
Kazusa: Huh?
Setsuna: With that satisfied expression, it's like you're flaunting what happened in the last two days.
Kazusa: I'd say my expression right now would be one of exhaustion, if anything.
Setsuna: Hmm?
Kazusa: What? Don't stare at me with that weird look on your face. If you have the time to think about all this stuff, how about we rehearse a little before dinner gets here?
Setsuna: Yeah, good call. It'll put my mind at ease a little.
Kazusa: Stop saying weird stuff like that all the time. Come on, let's begin.
Setsuna: Yes, ma'am!
Setsuna (Inner monologue): Hey, Touma-san. Why do you look so fulfilled? Is it just because you had him to yourself these last two days? Or perhaps...
Setsuna (Inner monologue): The meaning of this song, do you...

04. Whose, from who, for who

(Setsuna rehearses)
Kazusa: What's wrong, Ogiso? Feeling tired after all?
Setsuna: What time is it now?
Kazusa: It's past 12 already. The date changed and we didn't even notice.
Setsuna: So it's already been 6 hours since dinner, huh? My throat does feel a little dry.

Kazusa: Yeah, might as well take a break. Compared to the guitar portion you're in much better shape anyway.

Setsuna: That reminds me, where'd our guitarist go?

Kazusa: He said he wanted to take a shower and left a while ago, you don't remember?

Setsuna: Ah, is that right?

Kazusa: That's some level of concentration you have there. I'd say the vocal portion is just about ready. I should probably go direct my attention to the other guy now.

Setsuna: Ah...

Kazusa: What's wrong? You seem a little down. You don't think you're at your best yet?

Setsuna: Well, just a little.

Kazusa: Really? I think your voice sounds great. To be honest, as long as you don't forget the lyrics there won't be any problems at all.

Setsuna: I'm not nearly there yet. It still doesn't feel like I've given everything I can to this song.

Kazusa: You sure are a perfectionist, Ogiso. Well, it's true that compared to the other two, you haven't rehearsed this one nearly as many times.

Setsuna: I'm not talking about the number of times I've practised. It's just that I haven't let this song sink in quite as much.

Kazusa: Ogiso?

Setsuna: Every time I try to sing, I get butterflies in my stomach. It's like something is stopping me from pouring my soul into this song.

Kazusa: Is that right? You must have high standards when it comes to singing, huh? To be honest, I've never looked too deep into the meaning behind lyrics.

Setsuna: Hey, Touma-san.

Kazusa: Hmm?

Setsuna: If it was you, how would you interpret these lyrics? What kind of feelings would you approach this song with?

Kazusa: I wouldn't know the first thing about something like that. Besides, I didn't write these lyrics. Go ask Kitahara about stuff like that.

Setsuna: I can't ask Haruki-kun about something so embarrassing!

Kazusa: Are you saying you want me to say something equally embarrassing?

Setsuna: Please, Touma-san. Could you imagine yourself in this person's shoes and tell me how you feel?

Kazusa: What does that even mean?

Setsuna: "Are you pretending to be alone? I wonder why. I couldn't stop thinking about it. " *She's reading the lyrics

Kazusa: Hey, I didn't say I'd agree to that...

Setsuna: "Before I knew it, I was drawn to you more than to anyone else."

Kazusa: Ogiso...

Setsuna: How does one deliver their feelings to someone else? How would this person handle it?

Kazusa: ...

Setsuna: With a joking tone, to hide their embarrassment? Or maybe something over-the-top? Or maybe, even if they're bad with words, even if they can only mumble it in a tiny voice, they would still honestly and straightforwardly confess?

Kazusa: Ah...

Setsuna: Touma-san, what if it were you?

Kazusa: Let's see, if it were me...

Setsuna: Yes?

Kazusa: ...I would think that being troubled by something like this is really stupid.

Setsuna: ...

Kazusa: To put it bluntly, this woman's pathetic. Being so cowardly when it's not a big deal.

Setsuna: Touma-san...

Kazusa: Was that enough of an answer? Geez, why do I have to talk about such embarrassing stuff with you...

Setsuna: Then, if it were you...

Kazusa: We're still going?

Setsuna: If this person straightforwardly delivered his feelings to you, would you accept it?

Kazusa: Don't imagine these meaningless scenarios. Besides, when did I become the receiving end?

Setsuna: For whom does this person have feelings for, I wonder?

Kazusa: Come on now...

Setsuna: What do you think, Touma-san?

Kazusa: Ah, geez, I'm already covered in goosebumps. Can we stop this? I'm not good with these topics at all.

Setsuna: What do you think about this person who can't deliver his feelings? What if you were the one he wants to deliver them to?

Kazusa: I don't know! I have no clue what you've been talking about for the past few minutes!

Setsuna: You don't know?

Kazusa: Besides, you've got the scenario mixed up. This song is from a female perspective. The receiving person should be a male.

Setsuna: Do you feel this is from a female perspective? Do you really think that it's being sang to a male?

Kazusa: Of course. Kitahara may have written the lyrics, but you're the one who has to sing them, you know? He wrote these lyrics for you, you know?

Setsuna: ...

Kazusa: Though, for the school idol to be singing something like this, it does seem a bit odd.

Setsuna: ...

Kazusa: Ah, I didn't choose my words properly. Basically what I meant was...

Setsuna: Then, who wouldn't seem odd singing this song? Someone with undeliverable feelings, but doesn't take action. Do you know someone like that, Touma-san?

Kazusa: There's... no one like that. Besides, the person in the song wasn't modelled after anyone.

Setsuna: ...

Kazusa: The one who wrote this is that Kitahara, you know? He probably read a giant pile of romance novels then pieced the bits he liked together or something.

Setsuna: ...

Kazusa: Nobody's feelings are embedded in the lyrics. It's designed by an honours student in order to appeal to the masses. It's just a string of words meant to effectively ignite the audience's emotions, that's all.

Setsuna: ...

Kazusa: That's why you don't need to think about it so hard, Ogiso. Just relax as if this was just another karaoke song.

Setsuna: Touma-san, you're...

Kazusa: Hmm?

Setsuna: ... an awful girl, you know?

Kazusa: What?

Setsuna: Maybe you haven't realised it yet... No, if that were the case, it'd just make it worse.

Kazusa: What are you saying all of a sudden?

Setsuna: Sorry, I spoke my mind without thinking there.

Kazusa: That's not an apology!

Setsuna: I'm sorry.

Kazusa: What was that all about? Tomorrow, no, today's the day of the performance, you know? This isn't the time for us to be fighting!

Setsuna: But, but... Touma-san, you really don't get it?

Kazusa: Get what?

Setsuna: The meaning behind me singing this song.

Setsuna (Inner monologue): For me, the only one left out of it, to sing this song.

Kazusa: There's no way I can understand. I don't understand anything you've been saying!

Setsuna: Why... don't you understand, I wonder?

Kazusa: I'm bad at using my head, okay? I don't understand anything that's not music!

Setsuna: It's not a matter of intelligence. It's about your state of mind. Whether or not you even want to understand it.

Kazusa: ...

Setsuna: Do you really not understand? No matter how many times you think it over, you still won't change your mind?

Kazusa: That's right. Not a clue.

Setsuna: Despite everything I'm saying, you still won't make the effort to try?

Kazusa: Seriously! let's drop this topic already! Break's over, let's get back to rehearsal.

Setsuna: Touma-san...

Kazusa: You're the one who said we're out of time. Come on, lets go through the second verse.

Setsuna: Ah...

Kazusa: ...Why aren't you singing?

Setsuna: Because, I don't understand these feelings.

Kazusa: I already told you, asking me is useless!

Setsuna: No, the feelings I don't understand... are your feelings.

Kazusa: Ogiso!

Haruki: Sorry for the wait! Ah, that was refreshing! So, who's going next... ...

What's wrong?

Setsuna: ...

Kazusa: ...

05. A middle schooler's romance

(Group rehearsal)

Haruki: Sweet, didn't miss a single note! We did it! We actually made it in time! ... Hey Touma, I did pretty well just now, right? Setsuna, I didn't get in the way of your singing, right? ... Something wrong, you two?

Kazusa: Ogiso, we need to have quick meeting. Come to my room.

Setsuna: Sure. Let's go.

Haruki: Huh? Wait, why is it just her?

Kazusa: You did pretty well just now, right? You don't need to take part in the meeting.

Setsuna: Sorry about this, Haruki-kun, I just need to quickly borrow your mentor for a second.

Haruki: Hey, wait a second. What should I be doing while you guys have your meeting?

Kazusa: Good question. Just keep practising then. Come call me once you can play it perfectly 10 times in a row.

Haruki: Wait, the festival would be long over by the time I manage that!

Kazusa: Come in.

Setsuna: Okay.

Kazusa: Even that nosy Kitahara wouldn't think to come barging in here.

Setsuna: Oh wow, it's already getting brighter!

Kazusa: That's because it's almost dawn.

Setsuna: Is that so... Ah, We should get ready to head to school soon, huh?

Kazusa: You tired?

Setsuna: I'd be lying if I said I wasn't. My eyelids are getting heavier by the second~ Haha.

Kazusa: ...

Setsuna: Let's get on with the meeting then. Otherwise we won't make it in time for the performance.

Kazusa: Well then, since we're on a time limit I won't beat around the bush.

Setsuna: Sure.

Kazusa: That last rehearsal, were you trying to provoke me?

Setsuna: W-what?

Kazusa: Are you still angry at what happened? Is that why you sang poorly on purpose?

Setsuna: What are you trying to sa-

Kazusa: Your voice back then was just awful.

Setsuna: Ah...

Kazusa: I understand that you're exhausted, but that's clearly not all there was to it. Your mind was somewhere else the whole time, wasn't it?

Setsuna: ...

Kazusa: Care to explain yourself? I'm all ears.

Setsuna: Touma-san.

Kazusa: What is it?

Setsuna: You're only this honest, this serious, this strict, and this perceptive when it comes to music, aren't you?

Kazusa: If you take that away from me, I won't have anything left, you know?

Setsuna: I didn't do poorly on purpose. I gave it my best.

Kazusa: Is that so? Then I apologize. That said, my "awful" comment still stands.

Setsuna: Yeah, I know. Even I could hear how all over the place my voice was, and I couldn't help but feel how empty my voice was getting.

Kazusa: While your brain is smart you still let your feelings take charge, don't you? Any turbulence in your heart is immediately reflected in your voice.

Setsuna: You're amazing after all, Touma-san! Just like when we stayed over last time, you understand my feelings better than myself.

Kazusa: That's... not true.

Setsuna (Inner monologue): But you still can't understand his feelings, nor are you willing to understand your own...

Kazusa: So, what's your plan?

Setsuna: Plan...?

Kazusa: Promise me you'll pull yourself together and keep working at it, or just give up on the performance altogether?

Setsuna: Are those my only choices?

Kazusa: I'll get it out of the way now: at this point, I'm not willing to compromise. If we can't pull off the best performance possible, then I'd rather not perform at all.

Setsuna: Meanie~

Kazusa: Come on Ogiso, give me a break.

Setsuna: Touma-san...

Kazusa: This isn't the time to be doing this. Besides, you were the one who was all like, "Let's do our best and finish our song!", remember?

Setsuna: I'm sorry.

Kazusa: Like I said, this isn't the time for us to be fighting. This is for the success of our performance, you know?

Setsuna: Is it also... for Haruki-kun?

Kazusa: It's for you, Ogiso. And for me as well.

Setsuna: Ah...

Kazusa: This is about us right now, right? Kitahara has no part in this.

Setsuna: Touma-san...

Kazusa: I'll admit that... while I'm not great with people like you, it's not that I don't like you at all.

Setsuna: Really?

Kazusa: Which is why, Ogiso...

Setsuna: So it's not *for* Haruki-kun, but *because* of Haruki-kun, right?

Kazusa: ... Why do you always have to bring him into the conversation?

Setsuna: That's because if it wasn't for you meeting him and his annoying attitude, you would have a much different opinion of me right now, wouldn't you?

Kazusa: ...

Setsuna: Bouncing back even after being shot down, eagerly trying to talk it out with someone... Touma-san, would you have thought to do that?

Kazusa: ... No comment.

Setsuna: Haha, Touma-san, you're face is all red! You made the same face as when we first met.

Kazusa: ...

Setsuna: Just kidding! Sorry about that, Touma-san, I'm being really insensitive right now, huh?

Kazusa: Could you please give me a break? Even if you ask stuff I've never thought about before, I have no clue how to answer you.

Setsuna: Riding on my sensitivity right now, I have one more thing to ask...

Kazusa: There's still more?

Setsuna: This is my last request. If you can answer me, then I'll give it my 110%. Even if I have to force myself, I'll pull off the most perfect performance possible.

Kazusa: Ogiso...

Setsuna: That's why, I want to know...

Kazusa: What is it?

Setsuna: The name of the boy you like.

Haruki: Ahh! I pulled it off perfectly 8 times too! Can't believe I have to start all over again...

Kazusa: W-w-w-what are you talking about, Ogiso!?

Setsuna: Come on! It's practically a sleepover! How can we possibly not talk about that?

Kazusa: This has nothing to do with what we were talking about!

Setsuna: That just sounds like you're avoiding the topic.

Kazusa: ...

Setsuna: Hey, come on. Who do you like? Well, I know who it is already, but I still want to hear you say it.

Kazusa: Y-you're my worst enemy after all. It's true that I don't dislike you, but there's no way we can get along!

Setsuna: If I can hear your answer, I'll be able to pour my heart into this song. "These feelings can't reach him now, but they will one day!", or something like that.

Kazusa: You're lying! You just want to get back at me for before, right?

Setsuna (Inner monologue): Well, it does feel like I'm digging my own grave here.

Kazusa: B-besides, if you want to know someone else's secrets, you should first tell me who-

Setsuna: The boy I like the most is Kitahara Haruki-kun from class 3-E! Is that good enough?

Kazusa: Ah... ah... ...

Setsuna: I didn't think that would still come off as such a surprise. It's not like I was trying to hide anything, after all.

Kazusa: Why didn't you hesitate for even a second...

Setsuna: So, do you have any other excuses, I wonder? I'm confident that I'll be able to strike them all down!

Kazusa: W-well... To begin with, something like sharing the names of the boy you like is something only middle schoolers do!

Setsuna: Ah, you're right. It's like we're middle schoolers!

Kazusa: If you're aware of that then don't talk about stuff like this...

Setsuna: Talking about love like we're middle schoolers... I've always wanted to do something like that, you know?

Kazusa: Huh?

Setsuna: A lot of stuff happened when I was in middle school, so I never had a chance to talk about stuff like that.

Kazusa: Ogiso...

Haruki: Agh, I messed up at the same place again? What am I going to do if I can't fix it?

Setsuna: ...and that, was the very embarrassing story of Ogiso Setsuna's middle school life.

Kazusa: Ah...

Setsuna: Compared to Touma-san's past, mine probably isn't a big deal at all.

Kazusa: No, that's not...

Setsuna: Well, it's not like we can really compare the two.

Kazusa: ...

Setsuna: Touma-san, you're the second person I've ever told this to, you know? I've never even told Io.

Kazusa: So, the first person would be...

Setsuna: But, back then, I didn't have a boy that I liked, so I probably didn't have a chance to talk about it anyway.

Kazusa: Is that right...

Setsuna: The sun's already up, huh?

Kazusa: It's almost 7.

Setsuna: It's this late already, huh...

Kazusa: Yep.

Setsuna: ...

Kazusa: ...

Setsuna: Well then, it's Touma-san's turn now!

Kazusa: Come on, the mood was set for a perfect ending! Why can't you just let it go?

Setsuna: But I already told you who I liked, and even threw in the story of my middle school life! It'd be such a ripoff if I don't get anything in return.

Kazusa: Ogiso, are you sure you understand our situation right now?

Setsuna: I understand it perfectly. I've already turned into spoiled child, so it's only right for Touma-san to give in, right?

Kazusa: Having you never considered giving in yourself?

Setsuna: I could give in... But if I did that, I wouldn't be able to untie the knot in my heart. I might sound awful again, you know?

Kazusa: You crafty little...

Setsuna: Look who's talking. I've already answered everything you asked me.

Kazusa: ...

Setsuna: Touma-san, you want me to do my best, right? You want the performance to be a success, right? Not just for me, but for you too.

Kazusa: ...

Setsuna: Just come out with it, Touma-san! It's not like I'll tell Haruki-kun or anything.

Kazusa: Wait, why are you assuming its Kitahara?

Setsuna: Okay, I won't say any names. I'll calmly and attentively wait for your answer.

Kazusa: Look, I already said...

Setsuna: Come on! Take it slowly, and tell me those 7 syllables!

Kazusa: How do you know how many syllables it is...

Setsuna: I got it. I'll be respectful and let you take the first step yourself!

Kazusa: Even though you've been pushing me so hard this whole time...

Setsuna: Well then, go ahead!

Kazusa: Huh? Um...

Setsuna: Hehe.

Kazusa: Um. Well.

Setsuna: Teehee.

Kazusa: The...

Setsuna: Yes?

Kazusa: The person... I like?

Setsuna: Yes, yes.

Kazusa: Well, it's not like there's any special meaning to it, right? Just someone I don't hate all that much...?

Setsuna: Just say that person's name, come on, Touma-san.

Kazusa: ...

Setsuna: Yes, just like that! Say it say it say it! I said it too, you know? It's not embarrassing at all!

Kazusa: Ha... ...!!

Setsuna: Setsuna: ...

Kazusa: The... the...

Setsuna: Yes?

Kazusa: The... well, the person I like...

Setsuna: Ah...

Kazusa: ... doesn't exist.

Setsuna: Touma-san you big fat coward!

Kazusa: It's not my fault there's nobody like that! I'm telling the truth!

Setsuna: Liar! Touma-san you liar! Liar! Liar liar liar!

Kazusa: I'm not lying! I've never had those sorts of interests my entire life!

Setsuna: Geez. Acting all high and mighty saying someone's love is like a middle schooler's. What about you, Touma-san? Yours is more like a grade schooler's!

Kazusa: I'm not in love at all!

Setsuna: I've seen these people back in grade school, you know? No matter how obvious it is to everyone else, they would still try to deny it, saying stuff like "I hate that person!" or something.

Kazusa: Even if you say that, I can't help it! Ever since grade school piano's been the only thing on my mind.

Setsuna: Why can't you just honestly say it? You're even trying so hard to help him!

Kazusa: That's just your interpretation! Besides, why do you like that idiot? What do you even see in him?

Setsuna: Hmm, the reason why I like him is probably the complete opposite of yours.

Kazusa: Like I said, I don't have a reason to like him...

Setsuna: Compared to other guys, he doesn't think of me as a girl as much. That puts me at ease.

Kazusa: Wait a second, if it's the complete opposite of that, then...

Setsuna: It puts me at ease, but it still gets me a little irritated. That's why I want him to see me more as a girl no matter what.

Kazusa: Why are you so sure he's the one? You two don't really make a great pair.

Setsuna: I've never thought about that.

Kazusa: You've won Miss Houjou Prep. 2 years in a row, you know? You should set your standards higher! Picking him is such a waste.

Setsuna: Ehh? But Haruki-kun is a little bit better looking than the average guy, right? It's nice that it's just that "little bit" and not over-the-top.

Kazusa: What are you even saying? There's a limit to a "little bit", isn't there? That "little bit" is too "little", don't you think?

Setsuna: You're not denying that he's better looking than the average guy, huh?

Kazusa: ... Only an idiot would do something as unfitting for his honour student image as joining a band.

Setsuna: Not being overly perfect is one of his good points!

Kazusa: What are you saying? He's full of flaws. I told him he was being annoying so many times, yet he still couldn't take a hint and just kept bothering me.

Setsuna: But he works hard without expecting anything in return, and is honest to everyone around him.

Kazusa: This conversation's going nowhere fast. You're so biased that there's no

point any more.

Setsuna: Also, he's great at the guitar!

Kazusa: You call that great? Besides, even if he does get better at it some day, it'll be because of his mentor.

Setsuna: Intentionally or not, you're still bent on showing off your influence over him, huh?

Haruki: Ah... Oh, oh no, I fell asleep? Wh-what number was I on again...?

Kazusa: Hey, Ogiso...

Setsuna: Yeah?

Kazusa: How is it that you can start liking someone so easily? You've only met him for a month, right?

Setsuna: Touma-san...

Kazusa: You might be betrayed again, or you might be tossed aside again. Have you never thought about that? You've been through that, after all.

Setsuna: I've thought about it. Many times in fact.

Kazusa: You did?

Setsuna: If he doesn't accept my feelings... Or, even if he accepts it, but it still falls apart at the end... I've even lost sleep thinking about stuff like that.

Kazusa: I-is that right?

Setsuna: I'm not confident about it, not even a little.

Kazusa: If that's the case, then...

Setsuna: Even so, I can't stop this feeling of affection. I've let my emotions completely take a hold of me.

Kazusa: You're a brave girl, Ogiso.

Setsuna: You're too much of a coward, Touma-san.

Kazusa: Something wrong with being a coward?

Setsuna: Yeah, it's wrong. Though that's just my opinion.

Kazusa: I can't bring myself to trust anyone anymore. Be it strangers, friends, anyone...

Setsuna: ...

Kazusa: Because nobody's ever been interested in me before. Nobody's ever loved me before.

Setsuna: Why is your confidence so low even though you're so cool and good looking?

Kazusa: ... My confidence isn't the issue. It's just the truth. The 10 odd years I've been alive, is my reality.

Setsuna: Touma-san.

Kazusa: There's nobody on this Earth who loved me.

Setsuna: But right now, there's that person, right?

Kazusa: No there isn't. Didn't I say that already?

Setsuna: And I'm here too. I also love you, Touma-san. I want to be your closest friend.

Kazusa: Something like that is impossible.

Setsuna: Why? Why would you say something so cold? Do you dislike me that much?

Kazusa: Didn't you already answer that, Ogiso? I don't have the courage to make friends.

Setsuna: Even though I'm asking so eagerly?

Kazusa: It might fall apart, you know?

Setsuna: There's no way to find out until we become friends first.

Kazusa: Even if you both like each other... No, maybe it's precisely because of that, that everything will come crashing down...

Setsuna: Why is that?

Kazusa: Because we...

Setsuna: We...?

Kazusa: ... I'm kinda tired now. Good night.

Setsuna: Ah... That's not fair...

Kazusa: Just for a bit. Let me nap for 5 minutes.

Setsuna: Dodged the topic again... Even though you clearly fell in love with the same boy as I did...

Kazusa: Stop saying weird things. How could I fall in love with someone like that... Someone who's so annoying, so nosy, and who won't leave me alone...

Setsuna: I'm so jealous... Why is it that Touma-san gets to get all his attention?

Kazusa: That's not true. You're just over-thinking things, Ogiso.

Setsuna: If you keep saying stuff like that, I'll steal him away from you, you know?

Kazusa: Do whatever you want.

Setsuna: Can I?

Kazusa: ...

Setsuna: Come on, pretending to sleep again...?

Haruki: Touma, Setsuna, how long is this meeting going to take? Wait, I'll bet you're both asleep, aren't you!? Get up! We're not done practising yet! Come on, get up! Hey! Touma! Setsuna! Please! Wake up!

06. Just half a step from best friends

(Group rehearsal)

Setsuna: Ah...

Kazusa: ...

Setsuna: The one after the next one is us, right?

Kazusa: Yeah.

Setsuna: I wonder how many people are out there?

Kazusa: Who knows?

Setsuna: Should I do some deep breathing? Or maybe some vocal exercises?

Kazusa: Hey.

Setsuna: Yes?

Kazusa: ... Are you still angry?

Setsuna: Angry at what?

Kazusa: What happened this morning. Didn't you say I was being unfair or whatever?

Setsuna: Why are you bringing that up now? We've been chatting normally for a while now, haven't we?

Kazusa: Well, Kitahara was here just now, so I was wondering if you were just forcing yourself.

Setsuna: I wouldn't pretend to be someone else in front of you two! But it's happened before, so what I just said probably wasn't too convincing, huh?

Kazusa: I-is that right?

Setsuna: Although even now, you're still putting on a mask in front of him. Saying stuff like "I have no interest in you", thinking he's annoying, and pretending to be the bad guy.

Kazusa: ... So you *are* still angry. Guess I won't apologize after all.

Setsuna: Oh, were you planning to apologize? But you didn't do anything wrong,

Touma-san.

Kazusa: If you don't think I did anything wrong, then could you back down a little? You're making me all nervous.

Setsuna: You know, Touma-san...

Kazusa: What?

Setsuna: Unlike the bad guy you're so desperately pretending to be, deep down you're actually really cute!

Kazusa: W-what are you saying!?

Setsuna: You're so delicate, gentle, and caring, but also so cool, and so cute. I'm really jealous of you after all!

Kazusa: I don't know whether to take those as compliments or insults. Either way it makes me uncomfortable.

Setsuna: Oh, I'm sorry. I apologize. Then, back to the topic at hand... It doesn't bother me at all. In fact, provoking you like that is something I should apologize for. I'm sorry.

Kazusa: I'm still a little bothered, though... Ah, whatever.

Setsuna: Really? Thank you.

Kazusa: Okay, then let's end this topic here.

Setsuna: Hey, since it's over, how about we shake hands? As proof of making up.

Kazusa: Do we really need to shake hands at this point?

Setsuna: I don't think we've ever shook hands before.

Kazusa: Well, that's because we're friends, right? We don't need to do something like that.

Setsuna: Not just as friends, but as rivals as well!

Kazusa: I think you mean as fellow band members, right?

Setsuna: Who knows? At any rate, this handshake marks not only our making up, but also our declarations of war!

Kazusa: Seriously, where do you come up with all these weird things?

Setsuna: Hey, Touma-san, let's get along even better from now on, and be more open towards each other, okay?

Kazusa: Ogiso...

Setsuna: We can't...?

Kazusa: I...

Setsuna: ...

Kazusa: Are you fine with someone like me?

Setsuna: Thank you! I love you, Touma-san! I love you to pieces!

Kazusa: I'm glad that I'm a girl. You could kill a guy with that line, you know?

Setsuna: Hehe. Thank you! Now then, let's shake!

Kazusa: Sure.

Setsuna: ...

Kazusa: ... My hands are really tough, aren't they? They're not girly at all.

Setsuna: No, that's not true. These amazing hands are what brings out those beautiful sounds on the piano!

Kazusa: Really? Thanks.

Setsuna: Let's not be stubborn like grade schoolers any more, okay? From now on, let's experience what it's like to fall in love like middle schoolers!

Kazusa: Like middle schoolers? What does that even mean?

Setsuna: Just us two girls talking about guys, getting all excited, telling each other about our undeliverable feelings, and crying our eyes out together...

Kazusa: Undeliverable feelings...

Setsuna: Hey, Touma-san.

Kazusa: Yeah?

Setsuna: I'll do my best. Haruki-kun's words, your melody, I'll sing them with everything I have.

Setsuna (Inner monologue): With the feelings that Haruki-kun has for you in mind, I'll sing.

Kazusa: Ogiso, you...

Setsuna: What is it?

Kazusa: You're an amazing person, but you're also a very devious person.

Setsuna: Huh? What are you talking about? I don't think what I said just now was that impressive, nor was it that ill-intentioned.

Kazusa: I'm talking about your ability to turn such embarrassing lines into something so simple.

Setsuna: Oh? Is that right?

Kazusa: You have everything I don't, and you can do everything I can't.

Setsuna: If you have such expectations from me, I'll be the one embarrassed!

Kazusa: Is that right?

Setsuna: Well, I guess I'll say it while I'm still embarrassed. From today on, you have to call me by my first name, okay?

Kazusa: Ah...

Setsuna: Even with that, I still can't call you by yours?

Kazusa: That's... I'm sorry. It's still a bit too early.

Setsuna: Why is that? Didn't we make up already? Didn't we become best friends already?

Kazusa: Because I don't think we're even yet. I haven't beaten Ogiso at anything yet, after all.

Setsuna: That's not...

Kazusa: But, you're right. One day. The day will come when I'll call you that. And that day's not too far away, either.

Setsuna: Huh?

Kazusa: That's what I think.

Setsuna: Touma-san...!

Kazusa: Well, that's that. To think you'd make me say something so embarrassing... As I thought, I'm bad at dealing with you, Ogiso.

Setsuna: Thank you, thank you!

Kazusa: That hurts, Ogiso! Come on, let go already.

Setsuna: Nope! Just a bit more.

Kazusa: Geez...

Setsuna: So warm... Touma-san's hands are so delicate and soft, but they're also so strong and cool looking.

Kazusa: Ogiso...

Haruki: Hey, the audience is going nuts out there! There's even people willing to watch while standing!

Kazusa: Ah...

Setsuna: Haruki-kun.

Haruki: C-calm down, you two. Don't get too nervous. Oh yeah, you both brought your handkerchiefs, right? You've both used the restroom, right?

Kazusa: ...

Setsuna: ...

Haruki: How are can you be so relaxed? We're right after the next one! We should be

mentally preparing ourselves, right? Oh yeah, how about we all take some deep breaths?

Kazusa: Hey, Ogiso, is **this** really good enough?

Setsuna: Of course. You should know as well as I do.

Kazusa: I don't know a thing.

Haruki: Huh? What are you two talking about?

Kazusa: Who knows?

Setsuna: Who knows, indeed. Whatever could we be talking about?

Kazusa: Haha...

Setsuna: Ah, Touma-san, it's not polite to laugh!

Kazusa: Look who's talking.

Haruki: You girls have been pretending I don't exist since last night, haven't you...

Kazusa (Internal monologue): Yeah, there's no problem. We'll be best friends one day. That day will surely come. But... But you know... Once we become best friends... Once we truly become best friends, what will happen to my other feelings? What will happen to yours? Ogiso...

Haruki: Well then, let's go. It's almost time.

Setsuna: Okay. Let's go, Touma-san.

Kazusa: Sure. Let's.

Kazusa (Internal monologue): But at least right now, we're still together.

07. Epilogue

Kazusa: Setsuna...

Setsuna: Kazusa...

Kazusa: I'm sorry...

Setsuna: Kazusa... Kazusa!!

Setsuna (Internal monologue): I'm sorry, Kazusa. I'm sorry for betraying you. I'm sorry for all the troubles I've caused you. I was the only one who knew... How all three of us felt... I knew it all along... And yet... I still ruined everything... I'm so sorry... It won't reach you. These feelings of mine will never reach you again. That's why this song is now mine. It truly belongs to me now. Hey, Kazusa... Haruki-kun... I can finally sing this song perfectly now. This song that embodies my own feelings, the song of... my love that will never reach anyone.

Fin.